



LIGHT INFANTRY
EXERCISE:
AS ORDERED IN
HIS MAJESTY's REGULATIONS
FOR THE
MOVEMENTS OF THE TROOPS.

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1797.

THE HISTORY OF
THE
AMERICAN

REVOLUTION.

BY JAMES BROWN,

AN AMERICAN HISTORIAN.

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1810.

Manner of
extending.

The files may be extended from right, left, or centre, according to circumstances; in executing it each front rank man must carefully take his distance from the man next to him, on that side from which the extension is made: the rear rank men conform to the movement of their file leaders.

When the company is not in extended order, all firing is to be by single men, each firing as quick as he can, consistent with loading properly: the firing to begin from the flank, or from the point first formed.

Firing.

In firing in extended order, it is to be a standing rule, that the two men of the same file are never unloaded together, for which purpose, as soon as the front rank man has fired he is to slip round the left of the rear rank man, who will make a short pace forward, and put himself in the other's place, whom he is to protect

protect while loading.—When the first man returns his ramrod he will give his comrade the word *ready*, after which, and not before, he may fire and immediately change places as before.

The same method of firing to be observed when advancing or retreating, which must always be in *ordinary time* (especially if cannon are ordered to the front with the light companies, which may often be the case)—Particular attention must be paid to cease firing on the first word, or signal for that purpose.

Advancing
and retreat-
ing.

To cease
firing.

All movements of the light companies, except when firing, advancing, or retreating, are to be in *quick time*.

Movements
in quick
time.

The light companies are never to run unless particularly directed, and in that case they are only to run at that pace in which they can preserve their order; and it is to be a rule that the two men of the

Never to run
unless or-
dered.

of the same file never separate on any account whatever.

Avoid confusion.

The utmost care to be taken to avoid confusion, which too much hurry, even in the smallest bodies, will certainly occasion.—The intermixture of files can never be allowed of.

File movements.

Though all movements should be made in *front* as much as possible, yet, from the nature of those of light infantry, and the ground they are more particularly liable to traverse, file movements may frequently be necessary. All such to be made from one of the flanks by previously facing to it, and the files to loosen, so as to march perfectly at ease, but not more.

Forming to the front.

In forming, the inversion of files or of ranks is not to be attended to if time is thereby gained. *Forming to the front* to be done by the file moving briskly up to the

the right or left of the leading file as ordered.

Form to right or left.—The leading Right or left. file will halt and face as directed, as will the succeeding ones as they come up to their proper distances.

Form forward to right or left—The Forward to right or left. leading file halts and faces as directed; the succeeding files lead round the rear, and form to the same front as the leading file has done, and at their proper distances.

When marching to the rear by files, *Marching to rear and forming.* and to *form to the front.*—The leading file will halt and front, the succeeding files will go round the rear of the leading file, and form on the right or left of it as directed. *Forming to the right or left, or forward to right or left* is done in the same manner as when marching to the front.

Signals, &c.
for officers
command-
ing.

All *signals, words of command, and directions*, are for the officer commanding the company or division, who gives the necessary orders in consequence.

Signals.

The *necessary signals* will be previously settled, and as they will be very few and simple, the officers and non-commissioned officers are expected to be masters of them.

Post of offi-
cers.

The officer commanding the company will be on the right, covered by a serjeant. The next on the left also covered by a serjeant. The youngest officer in the rear. In extended order the post of the officers and serjeants is always in the rear equally divided, where they must pay particular attention that the men preserve their order, and that they level, fire, and load coolly and properly; they must likewise be attentive to direct them to the supposed object of attack.

In marching by files the officer commanding leads; by divisions each officer leads one. The supernumerary officer, if there be one, is in both cases, with the officer commanding, ready to obey any directions he may receive from him.

When a light company or detachment is ordered to take post on any particular spot, it is to be the busines of the officer commanding it to take the best advantage of the ground, observing that he must never disperse his company; but if it should be necessary to make small detachments from it, he must still preserve a part of his company or detachment as a reserve on which those detachments may fall back; and this is to be a general rule in all cases where the strength of the party is sufficient to allow of making detachments from it.

The officers must also see that in situations of defence the men cover them.

To cover in situations of defence.

B selves

selves with trees, walls, large stones, or whatever may present itself. In firing from behind trees, large stones, &c. they are to present to the right of the object which covers them; and in changing places with the other man of the file, after firing, they will step back, and to the left, so that the rear rank man may step forward without being exposed.

Arms how carried.

The arms of light infantry in general will be carried sloped, and with the bayonets fixed. Flanking and advanced parties however, or parties in particular situations, may carry them trailed and without bayonets, for the purpose of taking cooler and more deliberate aim.

*Light Infantry attached to respective
Regiments when in Line.*

The light company will be posted in the rear of its respective regiment, divided in two divisions; that on the right will be in the rear of the second company, that on the left in the rear of the seventh company, and they will at all times observe the distance of thirty paces. The captain, or officer commanding will be with the right division.

Divisions cover 2d and 7th companies.

Post of commanding officer.

When the line breaks into column, if the light companies receive no particular directions for covering either the front or flanks of the column, they will wheel as the companies of the battalion do, and conform themselves exactly to the movements of the second and seventh companies, so as at all times to be in their proper places.

Line breaks into column.

Line forms
close column.

If the line forms a close column, and the light companies receive no particular directions, they are to form by companies, and close up in the rear of the column, in the same manner as their respective battalions.

Line deploys

When the column deploys into line, the light companies will face each, as its battalion does, file with it in the rear; and when the battalion forms in the line, will take its proper post in divisions behind the second and seventh companies.

Cover front
of battalions.

If the light companies are ordered to cover the line to the front, either by word or signal, the divisions will move to the front, from their inner flanks, round the flanks of the battalions; and when at the distance of fifty paces, the leading flanks will wheel towards each other, so as to meet opposite the centre of the battalion, opening their files gradually from the rear, so as to cover the whole extent

of

of the battalion; the sergeant-coverer of each division attending to the files taking their proper distance, the files are to halt and front of themselves. In this position, and in all extended order, the Post of commanding officer.

When the light companies are called in, the line may either be halted or advancing. In the first case they will retire towards the line, closing to their outer flanks by degrees, so as when they come near their battalions they may be in two divisions ready to file round the flanks of the battalion to their places. If the line is advancing, they will only close to their outer flanks, so as to be in two divisions by the time the line comes up to them, when they will instantly face outward, and file to the rear.

Line halted
or advancing
when light
infantry are
called in.

Light

Light Infantry Companies formed in Battalion.

Movement
fame as the
line.

When the Light Infantry companies are assembled in battalion, their movements must be on the same principles as those of the line; the officers and non-commissioned officers posted in the same manner, and, as far as possible, the same words of command should be used; it is in their rapidity alone that they must be distinguished, to facilitate which the files are to be loosened to the distance of six inches, but great care is to be taken that rapidity does not degenerate into confusion.

Quick time. When two or more companies are together, they are to consider themselves as a battalion, the senior officer is to take the command, leaving the immediate command of his own company to the next officer belonging to it. As Light Infantry

Infantry seldom act in large bodies, all their movements may be in quick time; but, when in column, the same attention must be paid to the pivots covering, and the preservation of distances, as is done by the line; the doing so will always be found the quickest way of forming, by precluding the necessity of much after-dressing.

In marching in line to the front a regulating company must be named, by which the others must carefully dress, and whose movements they must follow. The officer leading this regulating company must take points on which to march perpendicular to the front of the battalion, and must lead steadily on them, though in quick time; without these precautions, and great attention being paid to them, the march in front must soon become irregular, the files will inevitably intermix, and great confusion must be the consequence.

Covering
pivots, &c.

Regulating
Company.

A bat-

May occa-
sionally run.

A battalion of light infantry may occasionally be ordered to run, for the purpose of anticipating an enemy going to occupy any particular post; but in doing so, the utmost care is to be taken that confusion do not ensue; for which purpose, the velocity must never exceed that at which the divisions can keep together and be dressed; the distances must be preserved as much as possible. Running must generally be in a column; but in case of absolute necessity to make a very quick movement to the front, with a battalion of four or five companies or more, the best and easiest way of doing it without confusion will be in *echelon*, by companies, each retired six paces from the preceding one.

But general-
ly in column.

May in echel-
lon.

All columns of light infantry to be formed by sub-divisions, that is, half companies.

Forming
from open
column.

The forming from open column to the front

front may frequently be done by the divisions obliquing to the right and left of the leading division, and if necessary firing as they come up. Light infantry

Firing in divisions.

firing in divisions is to be always by single men, as directed in General Attentions.

Battalions of light infantry may frequently find it necessary to move by file through woods, and over very rough countries: in all cases where it is practicable it is to be done from the right or left of companies, and distances must be preserved for forming in the quickest manner possible—Whenever one company *forms*, the rest are to do the same, even supposing they do not hear the word or signal for that purpose.

Movement by files.

If to form to the front the leading file Forming in front.
of each company halts and dresses, the rest move up to the right or left of them to their proper places.

C

If

Forming in
right or left.

If to *form to the right or left*, the companies first form separately, and move up and dress with what will then be the front company, by which means the officer commanding will have it in his power to keep such companies in reserve as he thinks proper, as also in forming to throw them to the right or left of the front company, as circumstances may require; the companies which are to dress with the front company are to move up to it obliquely in line.

Advanced
and flanking
parties.

A battalion of light infantry marching through a wood should have parties in front and on its flank, in proportion to the strength of the battalion. The parties should march in front with extended file, and if attacked must take post and defend themselves till supported or called in.

To secure a
wood.

When ordered to secure a wood of no very great extent, the battalion should

go through it and take post on the opposite side, within its skirt, so as to have the plain before it: in this, as well as in all other cases, parties should be detached 30 or 40 yards on the flanks.

When firing in line advancing, the march must be very slow, the line must be preserved, and the officers must take care to point out the supposed object of attack, and see that the men direct their fire to it;—very particular attention is to be paid that the fire is directed to the proper object, and that it ceases on the first word or signal for that purpose.

Firing in line.

When the light infantry in battalion is detached from the line, the officer commanding must take care to understand thoroughly the nature of the intended movement, so as to be certain of co-operating with the line with exactness and precision.

Co-operation with line.

To take post. In general, the method of taking post with a battalion of light infantry, whether large or small, must depend upon the intelligence of the officer who commands it, but he must observe the same rule as was given for a company, viz. Whatever detachments he may find necessary to make, always to keep the most considerable part together as a reserve.

Commanding officer.

The success of any engagement in a wood, or strong country, depends upon the coolness and presence of mind of the commanding officer, and the silence and obedience of the men, fully as much as upon their bravery.

Arms how carried.

The arms of the light infantry, when in battalion, while in movement, are generally to be sloped, but always by order, and their bayonets are to be fixed.

Light infantry in line.

If at any time a battalion of light infantry

fantry is ordered into the line, the files must be closed, and it must in every respect act as other battalions of the line.

The Signals.

The SIGNALS—To Advance; To Retreat; To Halt; To cease firing; To assemble, or call in all parties, are to be always considered as fixed and determined ones, and are never to be changed. The bugle horn of each company is to make himself perfect master of them.

All signals are to be repeated.

All of those signals made from the line or column are to convey the intention of the commanding officer of the line to the officer commanding the light infantry, who will either communicate them to the several companies or detachments by word or signal.

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